



U.S. ARMY CHEMICAL MATERIALS AGENCY

Emergency Planning

Chemical Stockpile Emergency Preparedness Program

Planning is something you do every day, consciously or unconsciously. You plan your work day and leisure time. When you plan a weekend trip, you choose the best route, check the spare tire, make reservations or gather the camping equipment you'll need and arrange for a neighbor to feed your pets. You try to think of everything you need to do before you leave and everything you may need while you're gone.

Emergency Planning goes on in your community every day, too. But, there are several major differences. The plans are made for you by emergency planners you may not even know. Their job is to make sure officials and emergency responders know what to do, how to do it and have the equipment and facilities to protect your health and safety if an emergency puts you or your loved ones at risk.

If your trip plans go awry, you may be inconvenienced, annoyed or even have to call a neighbor to make sure you unplugged the iron. But, if emergency planners fail to consider everything that may happen in an emergency and appropriate actions, you or someone you care about could be injured or worse.

All-hazard Preparedness

If a fire threatens your home, you would expect fire and rescue services to respond rapidly to protect you and your property. You may not think about it, but you expect emergency responders to arrive quickly, to know what to do and how to do it and to have the correct supplies and equipment.

And, they usually do get the job done. That's due to careful and ongoing planning, training and testing of procedures and resources to deal with all kinds of natural and man-made emergencies such as tornadoes, floods, hurricanes, fires, traffic accidents and train derailments.

Increasingly in recent years, local jurisdictions and the public have become aware of hazards in our communities that we've lived with for years. Emergency planners incorporate these newly identified hazards into their all-hazard planning. In some cases, this recognition has sparked measures to improve emergency capabilities and resources that lend themselves to a variety of emergencies.

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In seven communities around the country, emergency plans and capabilities are being expanded for the slight but real threat of an emergency involving chemical agents. Experts believe the chance of an accident involving the obsolete chemical munitions and agents stored at the seven Army installations is remote. However, local officials and responders have to be ready for such an emergency today and every day until the stockpile in their community is eliminated.

With the help of state and federal agencies, these communities have plans and procedures in place now to deal with a stockpile accident, and they are striving daily to enhance that preparedness.

The Army, as custodian of the stockpiles, and the Federal Emergency Management Agency, which has

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Emergency Planning (continued)

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long-standing knowledge and experience in preparing for and dealing with emergencies of all kinds, provide funds, guidance, resources, training and other support. Other federal agencies, such as the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, also lend their expertise in specific areas of the program.

Your Community's Plans

Emergency planning takes into account the potential needs of the general public, special populations and individuals in your community. Plans must be made to protect schoolchildren, patients confined to hospitals, non-English speaking persons, retirement center residents, disabled or mobility-impaired individuals and even those who may be visiting or traveling through the community.

Each community makes emergency plans on the basis of its own unique needs and considerations. Planners consider the specific agents stored at the near-by installation, potential stockpile accidents that could put the off-post community at risk, various weather conditions, terrain, road systems and other site-specific factors. Computers help community leaders evaluate and select the best protective measures for specific accident situations.

In the unlikely event of an actual chemical agent emergency, computers will rapidly provide information (such as the agent involved and wind direction and speed) and recall pre-selected protective actions that local officials have determined will best protect you, your family and neighbors. But your community's officials, not computers, will decide what protective actions to recommend.

What Can You Do Now?

You can prepare your family for an emergency now by doing the following:

- Complete a family emergency plan by finding out the zones that your home, jobs and schools are in and be familiar with evacuation routes.
- Notify your local emergency management agency of anyone in your family who would have special needs in an emergency.
- Put together a family emergency supplies kit containing six basics – water, food, first aid supplies, clothing and bedding, tools and special items. Keep items you would most likely need during an evacuation or shelter-in-place situation at hand in an easy-to-carry container such as a box, a camping backpack or a duffel bag.
- Call your local emergency management agency with any questions.